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Data on entering freshmen at 358 institutions of higher education including the University of South Carolina (USC), were obtained in the fall of 1968 on a questionnaire prepared by the American Council on Education. This report, the third in a series drawn from analyses of these data, focuses on what USC freshmen consider as the major influences in their selection of a college, and compares their responses to weighted normative data based on questionnaire results from the 76 participating universities in the institutions surveyed. Of the 5 most frequently mentioned major influences, USC freshmen placed parents or other relatives first and the academic reputation of the college second, but freshmen at the national level reversed these influences in order of importance. Both groups were influenced by low cost and a chance to live away from home. USC students' fifth major influence involved friends who attended USC, while the national norms showed the role of the high school teacher or counselor as a major influence. Data on 1967 and 1968 USC freshmen revealed no change in the ranking of the 5 most frequently mentioned major influences in 2 years, and while reasons for selecting USC remained stable and in the same order of preference, a larger percentage of the 1968 freshmen selected this institution because of its academic reputation. (WM)

University of South Carolina

Division of Student Affairs

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Subject: Major Influences in Deciding to Attend the University of South Carolina

Research Notes No. 6-69 **June 23, 1969**

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No. 6-69

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SUBJECT: Major Influences in Deciding to Attend the University of South Carolina

Nature and Scope of the Study:

During orientation in the Fall of 1968, a questionnaire prepared by the American Council of Education was administered to the incoming freshmen at the University of South Carolina and 357 other institutions of higher education including sixty-two two-year colleges, 220 four-year colleges and seventy-six universities. The resulting summary data on entering freshmen included information on the entering freshmen at the University of South Carolina and weighted normative data based on questionnaire results from the seventy-six participating universities. Similar data were also available for the freshmen classes of 1966 and 1967.

The following is the third in a series of reports drawn from analyses of these data. This report focuses on the item in the questionnaire in which the student was asked to indicate the "major influences in deciding to attend this college". The first part of the report examines the five most frequently mentioned major influences for the total USC freshman class and for the national university norms. Next, the responses for the USC freshmen classes of 1967 and 1968 are compared. The report concludes by summarizing the chief findings of the questionnaire responses.

It is felt that analyses of these and other data obtained from the questionnaire data will be useful to faculty and staff members responsible for setting policy relative to recruitment, counseling, etc.

Table 1. Comparison of the Five Most Frequently Mentioned Major Influences in Deciding to Attend this College by 1968 USCFreshmen and University National Norms

1968

USC FRESHMEN			UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS		
RANK	REASON	%	RANK	REASON	%
1	Parent or other relative	48.8	1	Academic reputation of this college	55.7
2	Academic reputation of USC	37.5	2	Parent or other relative	46.1
3	Low cost	20.4	3	Low cost	21.6
4	Friends attending USC	20.2	4	Chance to live away from home	19.9
5	Chance to live away from home	19.5	5	High school teacher or counselor	18.6

COMMENTS:

1. "Academic reputation of this college" placed first for the national university norms and "parent or other relative" placed second. The reverse was true for USC freshmen. Although not reported here, the same responses appeared for both groups in 1967 in the same order.

2. The role of the high school teacher or counselor as a major influence in selecting a college was more important for freshmen at the national level than for USC freshmen students.

3. Students at the national level are influenced to a lesser degree by friends attending the institution than are USC freshmen.

Table 2. Comparison of the Five Most Frequently Mentioned Major Influences in Deciding to Attend the University of South Carolina by 1967 and 1968 USC Freshman Classes

TOTAL USC FRESHMAN CLASS

1967			1968		
RANK	REASON	%	RANK	REASON	%
1	Parent or other relative	44.9	1	(Same As 1967)	48.8
2	Academic reputation	32.8	2	"	37.5
3	Low cost	21.3	3	"	20.4
4	Friends attending USC	18.2	4	"	20.2
5	Chance to live away from home	17.5	5	"	19.9

COMMENTS:

1. There was no change for USC freshmen from 1967 to 1968 in the relative ranking of the five most frequently mentioned major influences in deciding to attend the University of South Carolina.

2. The two most important influences on USC freshmen for both 1967 and 1968 were "parent or other relative" and "academic reputation of USC" (first and second respectively). In 1968, the percentage of freshmen selecting each of these two major influences increased by four to five percentage points over the 1967 percentages.

CONCLUSIONS:

In contrast with national university norms, the entering freshmen at the University of South Carolina appear to be more influenced by family considerations than by the academic reputation of the University. There is evidence, however, that an increasing percentage of freshmen selected USC this year because of its academic reputation. The reasons given by entering freshmen for selecting USC during the past two years have remained stable and in the same order of preference.